

*Private Members' Business*

of the Canadian Commission for the International Year of the Child.

Currently, National Health and Welfare is actively involved in the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Working Group on the United Nations draft convention on the Rights of the child. This working group is an example of the wide recognition that is being given to the needs and rights of children, in Canada and throughout the world.

The Department has a direct and ongoing impact through income security programs, such as family allowances, and cost-sharing of eligible provincial expenditures on child welfare services through the Canada Assistance Plan, among others. More specifically, National Health and Welfare has taken special measures to pinpoint and begin the fight against the serious problems of mistreated or neglected children, including those who are victims of sexual abuse.

In the last ten years, Mr. Speaker, and this is quite overwhelming, Canadians have gained an awareness of the sexual abuse of children. In 1980, National Health and Welfare, in cooperation with the federal department of Justice, established the committee on sexual offences against children and youths. This committee's work, now known as the badgley report, described, in startling terms, the real and potential extent of childhood vulnerability. It is not rather unbelievable when you think about it, Mr. Speaker!

It reported that 42 per cent of the population have been victims of unwanted sexual acts at some point in their lives; One in two adult females and one in three adult males. Eighty per cent of these incidents took place before the age of majority and 25 per cent involved a family member or guardian.

To state it mildly, these revelations, combined with the Fraser report on pornography and prostitution, heightened public awareness and created a demand for action.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has taken specific action to deal with child sexual abuse. Among other things, Bill C-15 became law in January of last year. The purpose of this project is to reduce and prevent the secondary victimization of children by the court system.

This project bears witness to the special dimensions associated with a problem like child sexual abuse.

The child sexual abuse initiative launched by this government in 1986 included \$25.1 million over five years, to address the problem. Of course I think that is not much. We would need twice that amount, Mr. Speaker.

The Government is confronted with budgetary problems. National Health and Welfare, through the Family Violence Prevention Division, is responsible for the administration of \$20 million to develop innovative projects that will help us to prevent and treat child sexual abuse. Mr. Speaker, need I insist on the need to work on prevention, since a child who has been abused sexually or otherwise has a hard time readjusting to normal life. That is why we must focus on prevention.

Mr. Speaker, since 1986, the Department has funded more than 170 projects across Canada in awareness, training, prevention education as well as research and evaluation. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the eradication of child abuse is our main goal. More than 10 national youth serving organizations are working with the Canadian Council on Children and Youth on a National Health and Welfare funded project to develop a national training program for the prevention of child sexual abuse. I could elaborate on that project but it would take too long; I only want to mention it so that the Hon. Member can find out more from the Department.

The Canadian people are concerned about the abuse, exploitation and neglect of our children, Mr. Speaker, as Hon. Members are aware.

Since 1987, Mr. Rix Rogers, a well-known volunteer, has been serving as the Minister of National Health and Welfare's special advisor on child sexual abuse. Mr. Speaker, I took the time to read the report and I can tell you there were some incredible things in it. I told the Minister that, as Parliamentary Secretary, I would devote most of my time to trying to help him and his provincial counterparts— The issue was raised last week at a meeting of federal and provincial Ministers of Health which took place at Meech Lake. Of course, it also concerns provincial Ministers responsible for enforcing health legislation. But Mr. Rodgers' report is alarming and I would encourage the Hon. Members to read it to